

By Euan Kerr, *Minnesota Public Radio*

The Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts Rocco Landesman will visit the Twin Cities August 25th as part of his "Art Works" tour.

Landesman is visiting communities around the US to gather information and to promote the "Our Town" initiative, a proposal to use \$5 million in up to 35 communities to support planning and design projects, and arts engagement strategies.

The examples cited in Landesman's statement to the Appropriation Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies committee include the integration of public art into civic spaces; a community waterfront festival; affordable housing for low-income artists; rehearsal spaces to serve as research and development space for our performing arts companies; outdoor exhibitions and performances to enliven civic spaces and engage citizens. All of these have been tried in various forms in Minnesota.

The visit is at the invitation of US Representative Betty McCollum who sits on that particular committee. It has jurisdiction over both the NEA and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A representative from Rep. McCollum's office says the specifics of the visit are still being worked out but should be released in the next few days.

Landesman arrived at the NEA after a career in business, academia and the arts, including several years at the helm of Broadway show producer Jujamcyn. Landesman himself produced both of the "Angels in America" shows and "The Producers" musical.

Many Minnesota organizations receive NEA funding (including, in the spirit of full disclosure, Minnesota Public Radio.)